

SURF'S UP IN NEW ENGLAND

By Deerin Babb-Brott, CZM

Mention "surfing" to most people and they think of California sunshine, crystal blue water, and gentle breezes. That picture is about as far from reality as you can get when you're talking about surfing in New England.

Here, a great surfing day often means that a low-pressure system tracking just offshore is bringing heavy snow and 8-12 foot waves whipped up out of 40-degree water by 35 mph winds. Heavy weather means good surfing, and the 50 or so surf spots along the Massachusetts coast (with names like Long's, Stinky's, and Shopping Carts) don't "go off" until a storm somewhere off the coast builds up the waves.

Chest-head+ Points are bigger than the beaches. Light SSE wind started puffing around noon giving some of the spots a ripple on the face, clouds rolled in at the same time. Air temp 50 water 38, high tide 5 PM.

February 20,
<http://www.noreaster.surfshop.com/>

East coast surfers are preoccupied with weather and storms, and for a perfectly logical reason: weather typically moves west to east. Unlike the West Coast, where every meteorological hiccup across the vastness of the Pacific is east-bound and eventually causes a wave to bump up against a west-facing beach, East Coast surfers are largely dependent on waves traveling in the opposite direction of the weather—a frustrating state of affairs. And since the only systems that can do this reliably are coastal lows (including full blown Northeasters) and tropical storms, surfers closely follow every weather pattern that even hints of generating good waves.

Out to sea, our low is fizzling out, but it's already made its waves and the buoys from here all the way to the Hotel buoy off Jersey are all smelling long period stuff, some of it with respectable size. Looks like the real deal is tomorrow.

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<http://www.surfinfo.com/html/reports.html>

WHERE DO THEY GET THESE NAMES?

Although most surfing locations are christened with nothing more original than the name of the beach, a few receive unusual (if not very poetic) monikers. For example, "Stinkys" got its name from the decaying algae at this location, which is especially aromatic in the hot summer sun, while "Shopping carts" was labeled for the abandoned shopping cart, half buried in mud, visible at low tide.

